



# **Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B**

## **RESOLUTION #4B-22-0201**

### **Calling on the DC Library to Engage in a Community Process for Naming MLK Library Auditorium Adopted February 28, 2022**

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B (Commission) takes note of the following:

- The District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) completed a [\\$211 million renovation](#) of the flagship Martin Luther King, Jr. downtown library in summer 2020. The project was financed by the people of the District of Columbia through their tax dollars.
- While not originally slated to be named for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., when construction began in 1968, the DCPL Board of Trustees [voted to name the library after Dr. King in 1971](#) due to a city-wide effort to commemorate his contributions to our nation and the world.
- In December 2021, Jeff Bezos, the billionaire co-founder of Amazon, gave \$2.7 million to DCPL in support of a program unrelated to the Martin Luther King, Jr. library – Beyond the Book.
- In January 2022, the DCPL Board of Trustees voted to name the auditorium of the Martin Luther King, Jr. library after Jeff Bezos with no public engagement.
- Amazon, the source of Jeff Bezos's money, has a checkered history when it comes to its treatment of workers. Reporting shows that, among other things, [Amazon failed to respond adequately to coronavirus safety concerns](#), [provides police with facial recognition technology that incorrectly matches people of color with suspects](#), [failed to adequately protect workers from a tornado causing the death of six workers](#), [engaged in illegal anti-union activities](#), and [has litigated to prevent workers from supporting the Black Lives Matter movement](#).
- Jeff Bezos is the richest person in the world worth \$170.7 billion. However, unlike DC taxpayers who financed the construction, operation and renovation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, he [has engaged in a systemic pattern of tax avoidance](#), including paying little or no taxes in many years.
- Jeff Bezos has since asked that the [auditorium be named for Toni](#)

[Morrison.](#)

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an opponent of the massive accumulation of wealth in the United States in America, [frequently speaking](#) of the need to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor, including “We must recognize that we can’t solve our problem now until there is a radical redistribution of economic and political power.”
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. [was a strong supporter of the American labor movement](#) and gave his life supporting striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee. He famously said “The labor movement did not diminish the strength of the nation but enlarged it. By raising the living standards of millions, labor miraculously created a market for industry and lifted the whole nation to undreamed of levels of production. Those who today attack labor forget these simple truths, but history remembers them.”

### **RESOLVED:**

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B requests the District of Columbia Public Library engage in a community and public process to name the auditorium of the Martin Luther King, Jr. library.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B requests that no special weight be given to the name or preference of Jeff Bezos in that process.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B urges the library to consider naming the auditorium in memory of Clayton Lynn Cope, Austin McEwen, Larry Virden, Kevin Dickey, Deandre Morrow and Etheria Hebb who [involuntarily gave their lives in Edwardsville, Illinois in an Amazon facility](#) working to produce the wealth that enabled the gift to support the Beyond the Book program.

### **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That the Commission designates Commissioners Evan Yeats, ANC 4B01, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this Resolution.

### **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That, in the event the designated representative Commissioners cannot carry out their representative duties for any reason, the Commission authorizes the Chair to designate another Commissioner to represent the Commission in all matter relating to this Resolution.

## **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That, consistent with DC Code § 1-309, only actions of the full Commission voting in a properly noticed public meeting have standing and carry great weight. The actions, positions, and opinions of individual commissioners, insofar as they may be contradictory to or otherwise inconsistent with the expressed position of the full Commission in a properly adopted resolution or letter, have no standing and cannot be considered as in any way associated with the Commission.

**ADOPTED** by voice vote at a regular public meeting (notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of seven members was present) on February 28, 2022, by a vote of 8 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions.